

Message Text

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44

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9041

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PRETORIA 4542

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SF, AS

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER ATTACKS SOUTH AFRICA

1. REACTING TO STRONG STATEMENTS BY AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA, ON DECEMBER 12 SAG FONMIN HILGARD MULLER SAID: "I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THE ALLEGED STATEMENTS COULD HAVE BEEN MADE BY A PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA. I AM GOING INTO THE MATTER MYSELF."

2. DECEMBER 13 RAND DAILY MAIL CARRIES ACCOUNT OF REMARKS WHITLAM REPORTEDLY MADE ON BRITISH TV. MAIL STORY SAYS THAT WHEN ASKED BY LORD CHALFONT WHETHER THERE WERE ANY CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH TAKING OF LIFE WAS JUSTIFIED, WHITLAM REPLIED, "YES, IN SOUTH AFRICA TODAY IT IS JUSTIFIED." ASKED IF THIS MEANT HE WANTED LIBERATION MOVEMENTS TO TAKE UP ARMS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA, WHITLAM RESPONDED, "THE LEADERS OF SOUTH AFRICA AND RHODESIA TODAY ARE AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BAD AS HITLER." WHITLAM ALSO SAID HIS GOVERNMENT

WOULD DO "EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER THROUGH INTER-NATIONAL SANCTIONS TO BRING THOSE GOVERNMENT'S DOWN."

3. DFA OFFICIAL TODAY TOLD US MAIL STORY ESSENTIALLY CORRECT. HE ADDED THAT MULLER "SEIZED OF THE MATTER," BUT THAT NOTHING HAD YET BEEN COMMUNICATED TO AUSTRALIANS.

4. IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT EITHER MULLER OR THE PRIME MINISTER WILL MAKE A SHARP PUBLIC RESPONSE TO WHITLAM'S STATEMENTS. SOUTH AFRICAN OFFICIALS SEEM TO REGARD WHITLAM GOVERNMENT AS ABERRATION WHICH WILL SOON DEPART FROM AUSTRALIAN SCENE. IN NOVEMBER PRIME MINISTER VORSTER, SPEAKING TO NATIONAL PARTY CONGRESS IN BLOEMFONTEIN, STRONGLY CRITICIZED WHITLAM FOR HIS ANTI-SOUTH AFRICAN STAND. HE SAID, "LET ME TELL MR. WHITLAM THAT WHEN HE IS JUST A BAD MEMORY IN HIS COUNTRY'S HISTORY THE NATIONAL PARTY WILL STILL BE RULING SOUTH AFRICA."
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